to know her when it assigned me to review her book. The review was published on April 16, 1973. A few days later, David Marr called me up:

"Your review is excellent," he said. "Like the book, it shows that you are a good historian and a good Humanist."

"Indeed, she has made me a better historian, but I have yet to prove that I am a good Humanist," I replied.

Helen Lamb Lamont has made me a better historian because she has brought out a very important Vietnamese truth which I had only vaguely perceived before. She wrote: "The answer (to the Vietnamese will to resist foreign aggression) lies in the Vietnamese attitude that history is something far more than a simple chronicle of events or means to intellectual understanding. The Vietnamese . . . value the study of history as a means of achieving moral perfection . . ." Our history, as she has correctly pointed it out, is a history of resistance to foreign aggression. It is our national and individual morality, our humanism. We know that, if we submitted ourselves to foreign aggression and domination, we would negate the two historical missions of our people, that of *Dung Nuoc* (To build a Nation) and *Giu Nuoc* (To preserve the Nation). Vietnam, as a nation, is made of those who exist, who make their own history, and those who resist, those who believe that to accept injustice and oppression, to condone inhumanity is to give up our Will to Live, is to deny our very own existence on this earth we love.

Naturally, the successful fulfillment of the difficult dual task of *Dung Nuoc* and *Giu Nuoc* requires the participation and support of all Vietnamese, of the masses, the peasants who live in the villages. Dr. Helen Lamb Lamont, unlike most of social scientists and economists, did not see the Vietnamese village primarily as a center of ignorance, poverty, disease and superstition. To her, a "Vietnamese village was far more than a collection of families or an administrative unit. It was a commune, a corporate whole which held the individual families tightly within it. Unlike

the typical village in China and other parts of Southeast Asia, the Vietnamese commune collectively held a significant proportion of the total village acreage in communal land, the *Cong Dien*, to be tilled in rotation by the various families, with village authorities deciding which families would rent which fields." From this observation, she comes to another one, equally fundamental to the understanding of Vietnamese society—and to a certain extent of non-western societies as a whole—: The Concept of Law. "Vietnamese Law," she noted, "was not based on the principle of equality before the law, still less on the Western idea of individual rights. Vietnam's legal codes emphasized the group, be it the family, the community, or the state . . . Vietnamese law stressed one's duties and responsibilities for the well-being of the group, which meant maintaining the proper relationships within society and within the family and showing the utmost reverence for the dead. In such an ambience, no right is inalienable. Even the possession of landed property was only a temporary right conditional on its proper use and frequently revoked with no thought of compensation. . . ."

Equipped with these two main characteristics of Vietnamese social development: the commune-village and the Group Law, she proceeded to exploring another truth in our history of resistance to foreign aggression, namely that no resistance succeeded unless and until it became generalized and protracted. The strategy for success, especially in a country like Vietnam—small in size and not big in population—can be logically only guerilla warfare. Helen Lamb Lamont described and explained it precisely and clearly: "For centuries, guerilla warfare, Vietnamese style, had meant planning for just such a long war of attrition, wearing down the enemy and taking advantage of every possible element—the jungle, the mountains, the swamps, the tides, the weather, the mosquitoes and above all, village solidarity. It involves impaling the foe on the horns of a dilemma: the need to concentrate his forces for attack and the equal

need to disperse them in order to hold occupied and hostile territory. It required keeping the initiative by surprising the enemy when he was off balance and retreating when threatened—thus drawing the enemy further into the country and attenuating his lines of supply for future ambushes. In other words, it was a policy of being tactically offensive while strategically remaining on the defensive." I have yet to see a better description of guerilla warfare.

Scientific and gently rigorous in her analyses of some aspects of Vietnamese failures, particularly in dealing with the French conquest in late nineteenth century, yet always compassionate to the sufferings and the sacrifices of the Vietnamese people, she has, in *Vietnam's Will to Live,* essentially drawn a tableau of a continuing historial Vietnamese situation. As we Vietnamese see it, in every human situation, Truth and Justice can be attained only by an harmonization of *Ly* (Reason) and *Tinh* (Feeling). Vietnamese readers will surely regard her book as *Hop Tinh* (Conforming to Feeling) and *Hop Ly* (Conforming to Reason) and therefore to Truth and Justice. We applaud it as an honest attempt to understand us and our history.

Seeing our history under both *Ly* and *Tinh,* Helen Lamb Lamont is one of the very rare, if not unique, writers on Vietnam who has the lucidity and the courage—in the context of American anti-communist hysteria—to assess that "Vietnamese Marxists became the spiritual leaders of the nineteenth century resistance . . ." and that in Vietnam, the "Communist Party is an integrative movement in a disintegrated society." Indeed, since 1930, when the Vietnamese Communist Party was created, the Vietnamese masses have found in the Party and its beloved leader Ho Chi Minh a Reason to fight and a Feeling to persist and to win. Helen Lamb Lamont never doubted of the final outcome of the Vietnamese Revolution and affirmed that "the war goes on and is likely to continue until the United States recognizes Vietnam as a nation and agrees to withdraw all its forces."

On the last day of April 1975, months before she departed from this earth, the last American left the Vietnamese soil. She had ample opportunity to confirm that Vietnam's Will to Live has won and that her political conviction has become a historial reality. She would have chuckled when she read statements by officials and predictions by those incurably ignorant gurus of the think-tanks about a "bloodbath" which would occur when the Vietnamese liberation forces entered Saigon. The "bloodbath" remains a myth in the minds of the guilty. She would have advised these ill-wishers to turn to page 26 of her book and read: "When peace was finally made between Vietnamese and Chinese in 1428, the Vietnamese who had collaborated with the Chinese were given a choice of going to China or staying in Vietnam. A majority chose to remain in Vietnam. . . ." This traditional policy of tolerance and reconciliation was followed by all our leaders in our history, from the TRAN dynasty in the 13th century to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, and this despite the fact, as she remarks, that "in Vietnamese history, the great hero is the man or woman who rallies the country against invaders, not someone who invites foreigners into the country in order to take sides in an internal struggle for power." *Vietnam's Will to Live* is to me a classic book of history. A classic book of history is not the one which makes the readers feel they see "history repeats itself." This is not always true. Rather, it is the one which inspires and guides them to grasp the essence and the meaning of the movement of people, of women and men toward a more humane society, a society in which the forces of repressions, oppressions, superstitions, barbarity, recede in front of a protracted and united struggle by all concerned human beings. In this sense, *Vietnam's Will to Live* has brought to the field of history a contribution larger than Vietnam itself.

A few weeks before my review appeared in *The Nation,* I was invited, on March 6, 1973, to do a radio interview with Helen Lamont on her book. Before the interview

took place, we lunched at the Algonquin Hotel. That was the second time I saw her. That was also the time when many of us, our minds fresh with the memories of the barbarous B-52 Christmas 1972 bombing of Hanoi, suspected that the 1973 Paris Agreement, a victory for the Vietnamese *Chinh Nghia* (Just Cause), could be a tactical device for the Nixon Administration to continue its intervention in Vietnam. She had no faith of course in Nixon, but she had faith in the Vietnamese Will to Live and to win. When we left the table for the interview, she said to me: "Regardless of what Washington is trying to do to destroy the Paris Agreement, your people will be independent and free soon." There was a combination of firmness and confidence in her voice. For a short moment, I attempted to find a Vietnamese word to describe her as a person, a word which kept eluding me since I met her for the first time at a reception in New York City on February 23, 1973 at her niece's [Mrs. Priscilla Cunningham]. I found it that day. The word is *Hien*. Written in capital letters HIEN designates someone who has attained the highest level of wisdom and concern for the human condition. In small letters, it means: compassionate, kind, beautiful, a word we use when we speak admiringly, lovingly and respectfully of our mothers.

Helen Lamb Lamont is HIEN to me in both capital and small letters. I am proud to have known her. I shall always remember her as a HIEN American, not forgetting of course her important contribution to the understanding of the Vietnamese and therefore to the defeat of the United States military machine in Indochina and to the triumph of the American conscience and human decency in the world.

PROFESSOR BROWNE

Helen Lamont had four grandchildren and five step-grandchildren, ranging in age from two to seventeen. She took great joy in these young people. Today, to represent them, we have Jonathan Lamont Heap, a stepgrandson, who is a Senior at Greenwich High School. He has been active in school plays and is especially interested in the development of the motion picture. Last spring, for a film that he produced, he won first place in both the School and the State Film Festivals.

JONATHAN LAMONT HEAP

When I was only three years old, Helen became my step-grandmother. On many Sundays my parents took me and my sister Andrea to the house in Ossining, to visit Helen and my grandfather. I always looked forward to Sunday dinner. I found out recently that when I was very young, Helen had discovered I liked roast lamb; so every Sunday that I went there for lunch, she arranged to have it served. Just for me.

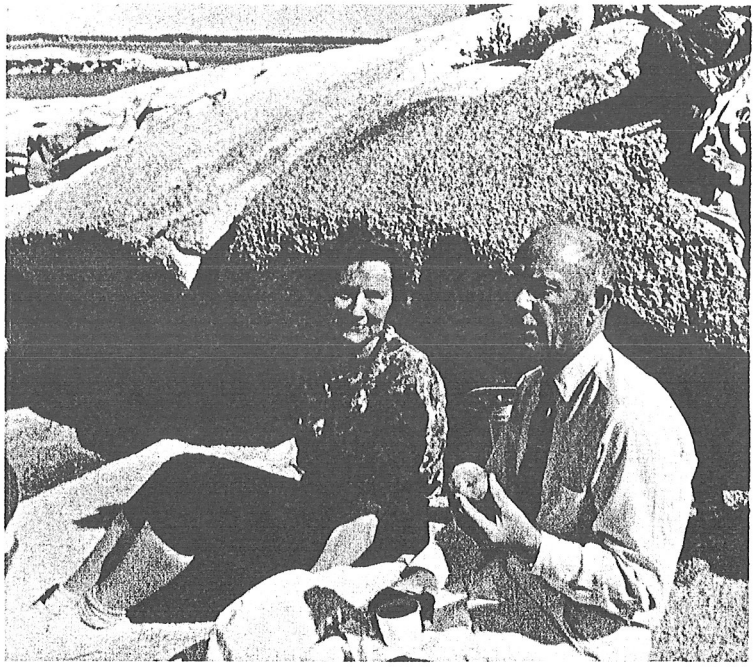
This kind gesture summed up her feelings and actions toward her younger friends and relatives. As one of them has said, "Helen was a keenly aware, ever curious, thinking person. She never slowed down, and life was a bit more energetic whenever she was there. Yet she was sensitive to the moment, offering a ready pat or whispered reassurance which always reminded you that she was nearby and cared." In her mind, every grandchild, grandniece or nephew, was a separate individual with faults as well as assets. For instance, she watched the development of one grand-daughter with interest and appreciation, as she changed from a reluctant, complaining tiny hiker on our first walks together, hating even the smallest uphill grade, to a competent sportswoman, enjoying equally hiking, skiing, tennis

and riding. As one grandniece said, "Helen always knew who I was," whereas other people sometimes mistook her for her sister.

Helen was very concerned about our well-being. She would always ask me what I was doing in school or out of school, and remembered to ask pertinent follow-up questions the next time I saw her; more recently, we had lively discussions about the movies we had both seen, and she didn't always agree with me!

Helen was willing to do anything with us or for us. Her thoughts were of our happiness and not of her own much of the time. She accompanied Grandpa Corliss and us on long hikes through the woods near the Ossining house, often going far afield with Grandpa first to scout out new and interesting territory for us to explore; and she enjoyed the shouts of excitement as we ascended rocky terrain or came out unexpectedly onto a new and beautiful lake. From the time we were very small, we joined Helen and Grandpa on many ski trips; and though Helen was by no means an expert skier, she nevertheless good-naturedly tackled some of the trails at Bromley, Mt. Snow and Aspen, Colorado, enjoying rehashing all the turns and spills at dinner in the evening. Whether getting ready for a picnic in Maine or planning the family Christmas at Ossining, she seemed to be relaxed and having fun with all of us. At Christmastime, she usually included a gift of candy for each child, which seemed a very nice old-fashioned treat.

One of my cousins speaks for all of us when he says, "It is for her thoughts and for her love that we will remember Helen."



Helen and Corliss Lamont on a picnic,
White Island, Penobscot Bay, Maine, August 1970

PROFESSOR BROWNE

I have been asked to announce that the families will be glad to greet friends at the conclusion of the meeting.

Our final speaker is Corliss Lamont.

CORLISS LAMONT

I want to read two or three more messages about Helen Lamont. Here is a cable from London that has just come direct to this hall. It is simply, "With you in thought," signed by Lady Juliette Huxley.

Then Anne Morrow Lindbergh writes:

"I think the rare thing about Helen was that the breadth of her mind was equalled by the breadth of her heart. They don't always go together. That is what made her such a wonderful person."

A third message is from Mrs. Bette Chambers, President of the American Humanist Association, who wired:

"The Board of Directors and I are deeply saddened to hear the news of Helen's death. Her monument is her long and courageous life, lived as a sincere Humanist and devoted champion of human rights and world peace. She will be greatly missed by all of us."

Yes, Helen Lamont was a member of the Humanist Association which designated her as a Humanist Fellow in 1970. Humanism is a philosophy that believes a person's supreme commitment is to work for the happiness, freedom and progress of all humanity here and now in this world. *Compassionate concern* for our fellow human beings is the Humanist watchword. And that was certainly Helen's guiding principle.

I wish to note also that in politics and economics Helen Lamont was a convinced radical, believing that the best solution for the critical, complex problems of the United States and the world is some form of democratic socialism.

That was a major reason for Helen's having the honor of appearing on Richard Nixon's Enemies List, once as Helen Lamont and a second time as Mrs. Corliss Lamont. It was obviously too much of a brain strain for United States Intelligence to figure out that those two names represented the same person.

During the thirteen years of our marriage, Helen and I were able to function consistently as a team and as comrades fighting for a better America and a world at peace.

This was especially true of our opposition from the start to the barbaric American war of aggression in Vietnam. Over a period of twelve years, we together wrote and published a number of public messages condemning the American Government's policy in Vietnam and Cambodia. In the spring of 1975, although Helen was very ill, she helped compose an advertisement on Vietnam that was printed in *The New York Times* and another one on the madcap Mayaguez affair in Cambodia. Of course it made Helen very happy when, in the spring of this year, the last American soldiers and airplanes were forced to leave South Vietnam, and the entire Vietnamese people could celebrate freedom and independence. That was a great day of vindication and triumph for Helen.

Now I am gathering together all of our public pronouncements since 1962 to be issued in another month or so in a pamphlet entitled "The Meaning of Vietnam and Cambodia."

Paul Sweezy mentioned Helen's interest in India and her writings about that great country. This reminds me of the fact that in the summer of 1926 both Helen and Jawaharlal Nehru, future Prime Minister of India, were attending the Geneva School of International Studies. Helen told me that one day she hiked up a small mountain with him and others.

Helen's last public action on behalf of truth and justice was to sign with me an ad supporting the plaintiffs who unsuccessfully sought financial compensation for the stu-

dent massacre at Kent State University in 1970. This advertisement was not published until after Helen's death.

During her illness of seven months, Helen kept working on a new book. It was to be about the Multinational Corporations, of which she took rather a dim view. Before she died, she had assembled a vast number of clippings and other references on the subject.

Helen Lamont died from cancer, a disease for which the science of medicine has not yet discovered either the cause or cure. If we could assign to cancer research $5 billion from President Ford's overkill defense budget of more than $100 billion, we might make real progress in controlling and defeating this dreadful disease.

We are grateful to the various speakers who gave of their time and thought to participate in this meeting. And we are grateful to the New York Society for Ethical Culture for making this splendid Auditorium available.

I think that the finest Memorial of all to Helen Lamont is for us to keep on working for the fulfillment of her aims and ideals. For the best of all answers to death is the wholehearted and continuing affirmation of life on behalf of the greater glory of the human race.

Obituary on Mrs. Lamont, July 22, 1975

Helen Lamb Lamont, an economist, author and educator and the wife of Dr. Corliss Lamont, author and former Columbia University lecturer, died yesterday of cancer in St. Luke's Hospital. She was 69 years old and had homes here, in Ossining, N.Y. and in Tamworth, N.H.

Mrs. Lamont, who was known professionally as Helen B. Lamb, was the author of *Economic Development of India* and of *Vietnam's Will to Live: Resistance to Foreign Aggression from Early Times Through the Nineteenth Century,* published in 1972. Both independently and with her husband she frequently took public stands opposing American involvement in the Vietnam war. The opposition often took the form of large display advertisements in newspapers.

Mrs. Lamont was graduated in 1928 from Radcliffe College, where she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Her first marriage was to a Harvard contemporary, Robert K. Lamb, an economist who became a staff investigator on several Congressional committees and was legislative representative for the United Steelworkers in 1944-47.

Dr. Lamb returned to the academic world as a lecturer at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He died in 1952.

Mrs. Lamb, who received a Ph.D. degree in economics from Radcliffe in 1943, had taught at Bennington, Black Mountain and Sarah Lawrence Colleges.

In World War II, she was a research analyst for the Foreign Economic Administration, working on the program preparing for occupation of Japan. After the war she joined the Center for International Studies at M.I.T., specializing on the economy of India. She was married to Dr. Lamont in 1962.

Surviving, besides her husband, are three sons of her first marriage, Robert B., William and Albert Lamb; her mother, Mrs. Walter L. Boyden; two brothers, Roland W.

and W. Lincoln Boyden Jr.; four stepchildren, Mrs. Ralph Antonides, Mrs. George Jafferis, Mrs. J. David Heap and Hayes C. Lamont; four grandchildren and five step-grandchildren.

TO HELEN LAMONT

No artist could capture that blue of her eyes—
A lady of beauty, so brilliant, and wise.
Somehow or other we all knew too well
That last day at Ossining was really farewell;
The man in her life stands firm at her side,
Her sons all around, she looked at with pride,
Grandchildren at play on grass so green
That matched her dress as she smiled like a queen;
And as she waved her last goodbye
Teardrops mingled with rain from the sky,
We raised our glasses in her name,
Hope she heard through her window pane.
It's plain to see why God would want
A blue eye'd angel named Helen Lamont.

—Agnes Docherty

(This poem was written by the Lamonts' housekeeper)

Editor's Note:

Since the Memorial Tribute to Helen Lamb Lamont in September 1975, several developments have taken place in relation to her work and activities.

First, Basic Pamphlets has published a booklet, *The Meaning of Vietnam and Cambodia,* by Corliss and Helen Lamont. This pamphlet consists of Open Letters, public messages, and essays by the Lamonts about the dreadful United States aggression in Southeast Asia from 1962 to 1975. The pamphlet may be obtained for 50 cents from Basic Pamphlets, Box 42, New York, N.Y. 10025.

Second, in the fall of 1976 Monthly Review Press, which published *Vietnam's Will to Live* under her professional name, Helen B. Lamb, will bring out her *Studies on India and Vietnam,* with an Introduction by Dr. Paul M. Sweezy, Co-Editor of *Monthly Review.* This book will contain some twenty essays and reviews written by her from 1954 to 1975, and published in various journals. *Studies on India and Vietnam* by Helen B. Lamb may be obtained after September, 1976, at Monthly Review Press, 62 West 14 Street, New York, N.Y. 10011.

Third, Helen Lamb Lamont's letters and papers have been requested by and delivered to the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America. This Library is at Radcliffe College, from which Helen graduated in 1928. It is good to know that there will be a permanent Helen Lamont Collection at Radcliffe.

Fourth, Helen Lamb Lamont's numerous books and pamphlets on Vietnam and Southeast Asia were sent to the Indochina Resource Center in Washington, D.C., one of the best organizations in the United States for research on Southeast Asia. These materials have been placed together to form a small Helen Lamont Collection.

—Corliss Lamont,
February 1976